

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in the application. Claims 23-28 are allowed. Claims 4-6, 8-11, 15 and 19-22 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1-3 and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). Claims 7 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the reasons stated in the response having a mailing date of January 12, 2005 and file a Notice of Appeal concurrently herewith.

Applicants amended claims 4, 8, 10, 15, 19 and 21 to be rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Consequently, claims 4-6, 8, 10-11, 15, 19 and 21-22 are allowable.

Applicants note that claims 4, 8, 10, 15, 19 and 21 were not amended to overcome prior art but to be written in independent form. Hence, the amendments made to claims 4, 8, 10, 15, 19 and 21 were not narrowing in scope and therefore no prosecution history estoppel arises from the amendments to claims 4, 8, 10, 15, 19 and 21. *Festo Corp. v. Shoketsu Kinzoku Kogyo Kabushiki Co.*, 62 U.S.P.Q.2d 1705, 1711-12 (2002); 56 U.S.P.Q.2d 1865, 1870 (Fed. Cir. 2000). Further, the amendments made to claims 4, 8, 10, 15, 19 and 21 were not made for a substantial reason related to patentability and therefore no prosecution history estoppel arises from such amendments. *See Festo Corp.*, 62 U.S.P.Q.2d 1705 at 1707 (2002); *Warner-Jenkinson Co. v. Hilton Davis Chemical Co.*, 41 U.S.P.Q.2d 1865, 1873 (1997).

CONCLUSION

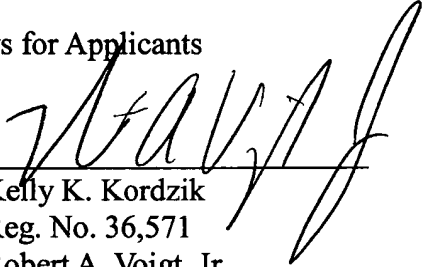
As a result of the foregoing, it is asserted by Applicants that claims 1-28 in the Application are in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request an allowance of such claims. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner call Applicants' attorney at the below listed number if the Examiner believes that such a discussion would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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